

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Beauty is the attractive things that can be seen through the aspect of others. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, beauty is the qualities in a person that give pleasure to the senses or the minds. The women's beauty deals with their characters, looked from their minds, attitudes, manner, and how they appreciate each other. Every woman has her own characters of beauty to be kept in, that characters can be built by the values and culture of society.

Culture is defined as holding the organization together through the shared values. It causes a critical element grows in the management of change because of its continuity, in other words, its defiance to change. The concept of culture's interest is largely linked to the fashionable view nowadays. Particular attention which is required by the management of change is cultural phenomena in organizations, particularly cultural revolution can be implied by the radical (Allaire & Firsirotu in Demers, 2007: 75). The cultural phenomena in Wharton's novel can be seen from American culture that dominate the characters in the novel.

American people in the 1870s still hold out the rule from queen Victoria that influenced most of the personalities and appearances of American people especially New Yorkers. The Victorian Era is a time with strict moral code which holds religious values, modesty and sexual restraint tight. Therefore, cosmetics were considered to be immoral during this period, their use thought to be something that only women with dubious morals would wear it. But it does not mean that all ladies stopped using cosmetics altogether. Possessing feminine qualities also expected by Victorian men, as well as innocence. In article, "Victorian Women Expected to be Idle and

Ignorant,” by Charles Petrie, he reveals what the Victorian man was truly looking for. Innocence is what he insisted from the girls of his class, and they must not only be innocent but also give the outer look of being innocent (Petrie, 2000: 184).

The women who keep their Victorian values have no right to anything. They must be ideal in other words, they must be “Angel in the house”, their works are only in house and they must obey their husbands. The only role of women in the Victorian era is to get married and look after the homely chores. The young ladies were groomed thoroughly to get married and had to be innocent, virtuous, biddable, and dutiful.

Definition of beauty in general can be seen as the growing up of culture in some eras. Attractiveness of women is relative, it depends on aspect of other who appreciate it. Beauty is all the women want indeed. The real of beauty is made up of two elements, beauty from the outside and from the inside. As the jury of Miss Universe contest gave to the contestants; beauty, brain, and behavior are the characters of beautiful women. But nowadays, we are alive where a media is enjoying to expose beauty and popularity from the outside of a woman. To follow that trend, so many women who are trying to change hardly their appearance only to satisfy the whole people even they do not know them well.

One of reasons why so many women like to change their appearance is because there are many women who feel that only with that thing they feel confident. Having appearance that closes to the word of “perfect” is often to be satisfaction to many people not only a woman. A pretty face, bright skin, tall and slim body, long black hair is only small parts of the criteria according to beauty definition from Indonesian. Beauty criteria will be further different from another country if only discussing about physical characteristics that is visible to the naked eye. It is called the beauty criteria from the outside because it will disappear by the age and will change with the changing times. Meanwhile, beauty from the inside or can be named as inner beauty will not disappear by the age and the period. Inner beauty concerned about the quality

of the self, self-confidence for instance. The confidence comes from intelligence, kindness, and sincerity. As the eternal beauty that always comes from kindness. That criteria will always have the equal size in various places even various times. A woman who has the high value of inner beauty in herself always has her definition of beauty itself. She is not easy to be influenced with the definition of attractive women which is born from the environs.

Beauty of women and their culture is the object which never enough to talk about. Everything about women with their identities in the real life is always interesting to be explored. These phenomena are often used by authors of literary work to develop their perspective about the story that they made. Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* (1920) is one of the literary works that reveal the relation between cultural approach and beauty of women. In this case, the researcher intends to conduct a study of cultural beauty aspect of both women characters, May and Ellen in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* (1920). This novel has 274 pages that are divided into book I and book II. It was originally published in 1920 by the end of World War I.

Edith Newbold Jones was born on 24th January 1862 in New York, The United States. She was born into wealth and privilege family. Edith spent her early years touring in Europe with her parents and when she with her parents return to the United States, Edith enjoyed her privileged childhood in New York and Newport, Rhode Island. By the age of eighteen, Edith's creativity and talent soon became obvious. She wrote a novella and published poetry in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Edith married a wealthy sportsman Edward Wharton after her failed engagement with other man but the marriage also was not success. Chronicle of many Wharton's novels are unhappy marriages, in which the demands of vocation and love often being the conflict with expectations of society. She lived mostly in France after divorce from Edward in 1913. She organized hostels for refugees when World War I broke out. Edith worked as a fund-

raiser and wrote for American publications from battlefield frontlines. As an honor for her courage and distinguished work, she was awarded the French Legion. Wharton died on 11st August in 1937 because a stroke. She was buried in the American Cemetery in Versailles, France.

The Age of Innocence is a novel about New York in the 1870s. That novel earned the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1921. It was the first time the award had been bestowed upon a woman. Edith Wharton wrote *The Age of Innocence* while she had seen World War I destroy much of the world as she knew it. She remembered on her early years in New York as a time of social continuity, and felt that a civilizing influence had been build from the passing of values by parents to their child.

The Age of Innocence told two perspectives of women, May and Ellen. Edith Wharton's novel examine conflicts about triangle love, separated women, social norms, upper class, married people, New York, domestic, and about title itself, all of them were facing down by Newland Archer as the main character. The researcher tends not to do research about the main character, but in *The Age of Innocence* has three central characters: Archer, May, and Ellen. Hence the researcher do research about the two central characters, May and Ellen. The cultural product also exposed such of beauty about a woman that show different perspective of May who is categorized as a great New York woman in that time and Ellen who has her style of beauty influenced by Euroupe style despite she spent her childhood in the New York. Set in Wharton's hometown of New York, The United States, in the early 1870s. It was portrayed a story of triangle love about three central characters that show why Archer as May's fiancé could attracted with Ellen as the separated woman.

In *The Age of Innocence*, as the researcher for one, several appeals appear in this novel. Beauty characters of every woman in the story becomes the interesting case, there are three things that can be analyzed. The first is to explore what is the type of women's beauty, so many definitions about beautiful women and it depends on the perspective that we used. Definition

about beauty is always develops according to the situation in each time. The second is this novel shows the characteristics about beauty which is different with another. Not only outer beauty, inner beauty which is formed by one culture with another has the different perspective too. The third is why the author of this novel pressed the importance of inner beauty in a woman than of women's appearance.

The Age of Innocence appointed two of the behaviors observed on this novel based on the two central characters' life which is influenced on the cultural condition and environment. This novel deals with the cultural phenomena that related with cultural construction such social norm, upper class, domestic, and also beauty of a woman.

Considering to the explanation above, the researcher tried in analyzing the novel by using cultural approach because of the following consideration. The beauty of women was emerged as the cultural construction in Edith Wharton's novel to be very impressive case in this study to encourage this research with the title **"The Importance of Inner Beauty in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* (1920): A Cultural Approach."**

B. Problem Statement

Based on the previous background of study, the researcher aimed at analyzing the problem "How Important of Inner Beauty in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* (1920)?". The importance of inner beauty can be described from (1) what type of beauty is reflected in *The Age of Innocence* novel, (2) what are the characteristics of inner and outer beauty, and (3) why did the author stress about the importance of inner beauty.

C. Objective of the Study

Conducting the research, the researcher formulates the objectives of the study as follows:

1. To identify the type of beauty which is reflected in *The Age of Innocence* novel.

2. To analyze the characteristics of inner and outer beauty.
3. To reveal the reason why the author stress about the importance of inner beauty.

D. Limitation of the Study

The researcher focuses on the research in analyzing the inner beauty criteria toward May and Ellen character at Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* (1920) on a Cultural approach.

E. Benefit of the Study

The researcher expected a lot that the researcher which investigated the issue "the importance of inner beauty toward May and Ellen character in this *The Age of Innocence* novel" gave many benefits. The benefits of this study would be differentiated into two benefits:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The result of this study is expected to be able to give information and contribution of knowledge to the academic reference. It can be also as a reference for other researchers who want to conduct further research and particularly the literary studies on this *The Age of Innocence* novel.

2. Practical Benefit

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience for the researcher in many things and other students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or for other universities where has the same interest in literary study on the literature from a cultural approach.

F. Research Paper Organization

Chapter I is introduction that consists of the background of the study, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, and paper organization. Chapter II delivers literary review which covers previous study and underlying theory. Chapter III is research method which presents type of the study, object of the study, type of the data and data

source, technique of data collection, and technique of data analysis. Chapter IV is structural analysis which discusses cultural analysis. Chapter V draws the conclusion and suggestion.